

**What is claimed is:**

1. A filter base module comprising:

a header portion defining a receptacle having an axis for receiving a communication end of a filter cartridge, and

5 a key track fixture mountable to said header portion for disposal about said axis and including a plurality of angularly spaced perforations, and an interior edge at least partially defining an entryway to said header portion, each said perforation at least partially defining a parting line for a notch-shaped tab having an angular component and a radially outward extent from said interior edge,

10 wherein at least one said tab may be separated from said key track fixture to define a selectively configured entryway to said header portion.

2. The filter base module of claim 1, wherein said key track fixture comprises a flat ring having a top surface and a bottom surface, said perforations extending  
15 from said top surface toward said bottom surface and said key track fixture is mounted within said base module with said bottom surface facing axially away from said header portion and said top surface facing axially toward said header portion.

3. The filter base module of claim 2, wherein said base module is a molded plastic component and said key track fixture is captured and held within said molded plastic.  
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4. The filter base module of claim 1, wherein each tab is angularly spaced a substantially equal distance from the other tabs.  
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5. The filter base module of claim 1, wherein each said tab has a substantially identical angular component and extends a substantially identical radial distance.

6. The filter base module of claim 1, wherein at least one tab extends a radial  
30 distance which is different from the corresponding radial extent of another tab.

7. The filter base module of claim 1, wherein at least one tab has an angular component which is different from the corresponding angular component of another tab.

5 8. The filter base module of claim 1, wherein the angular spacing of at least one tab is different from the corresponding angular spacing of another tab.

9. The filter base module of claim 1, wherein the ring has a plastic composition.

10 10. A filter system comprising:

a filter cartridge having a communication end including an exterior surface with at least one radially extending key, and

a base module including a header portion which defines a receptacle having an axis, said receptacle configured to receive the communication end of said  
15 cartridge and a key track fixture having an interior edge which at least partially defines the periphery of an entryway to said header portion, said key track including a plurality of angularly spaced perforations at least partially defining tabs which may be selectively removed to create radially outwardly extending axial keyways,

wherein at least one tab is removed to create an entryway complementary  
20 to said communication end to permit reception in said receptacle.

11. The filter system of claim 10, wherein said key track fixture comprises a flat metal ring having a top surface and a bottom surface, said perforations extending from said top surface toward said bottom surface and said key track fixture is  
25 mounted within said receptacle with said bottom surface facing axially away from said header portion.

12. The filter base module of claim 11, wherein said base module is a molded plastic component and said key track fixture is captured and held within said molded  
30 plastic component.

13. The filter base module of claim 10, wherein said key track fixture is a flat metal split ring, installable in an interior circumferential groove in said receptacle.

14. A filter system comprising:

5 filter means for filtering liquid, said filter means comprising a communication end having at least one radially projecting key means for defining a keyed configuration to said communication end;

header means for defining a receptacle for reception of a the communication end of said filter means;

10 inlet means mounted to said header means for transmitting fluid to said filter cartridge;

outlet means mounted to said header means for transmitting filtered fluid from said filter cartridge; and

15 key track fixture means mounted to said header means for at least partially defining a selectively configurable entryway to said receptacle complementary to said communication end keyed configuration.

20 15. The filter system of claim 14 wherein said key track fixture means comprises a plastic ring having an inner edge and a plurality of angularly spaced slots extending outwardly from said inner edge and defining said entryway.

16. The filter system of claim 15 wherein said ring is ultrasonically welded to said header means.

25 17. The filter system of claim 15 wherein said ring further comprises at least one notch extending through an outer edge of said ring and being alignable with a corresponding boss of said header means.

18. A filter system comprising:

30 a filter cartridge having a communication end including an exterior surface with a plurality of radially extending keys, and

a base module including a header portion which defines a receptacle having an axis, said receptacle configured to receive the communication end of said cartridge and a key track comprising a flat ring portion having an interior edge which at least partially defines the periphery of an entryway to said header portion, said  
5 key track including a plurality of angularly spaced and radially outwardly extending axial keyway slots partly defining said entryway,

wherein said entryway is complementary to said communication end keys to permit axial reception of said communication end in said receptacle.

10 19. The filter system of claim 18, wherein said key track fixture comprises a flat molded ring having a top surface and a bottom surface, said keyway slots extending from said top surface said bottom surface and said key track fixture is ultrasonically welded in place.

15 20. The filter system of claim 18, wherein at least keyway slot has a shape which is a different from the corresponding shape of another keyway slot.

21. The filter system of claim 18, wherein the ring has a plastic composition.